



Paul Robeson, 1898-1976

Paul Robeson

Paul Robeson was the Chairman of the [Council on African Affairs](#), an organisation based in New York, from 1937 until it was shut down by McCarthyism in 1955. [W. E. B. Du Bois](#) was vice-chair.

The Council on African Affairs was a vital link between the struggles of the African-Americans of the Americas, and the National Democratic Revolutions that were getting under way in those years, in Africa.

In the Council on African Affairs can be seen the historical as well as the theoretical unity between the descendents of the slaves that had been taken from Africa, and the people struggling for freedom from colonialism in Africa itself. The connection with the South African liberation struggle was direct, via Mr E. S. Reddy and Dr Yusuf Dadoo, among others.

It was a two-way street. Sometimes the African-American (and Afro-Caribbean) leadership was in front, and at other times the African example was, to an extent, impelling the trans-Atlantic struggles. This is the main reason why this body of literature, called “African Revolutionary Writers” does, and must of necessity, include many African writers from across the sea.

Paul Robeson himself was an extraordinary man who achieved excellence in many fields, including sport and scholarship, before becoming a star of the theatre and the cinema, and becoming a performing, recording and broadcasting artist as a singer.

The attached document can give a good idea of who Paul Robeson was and the role that he played in the liberation struggle, as well as among the people of the United States of America.

- **The above serves to introduce the original reading-text: [Excerpts from “Paul Robeson Speaks”, 1953.](#)**
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